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Statement delivered to the Fourth Committee of
the United Nations General Assembly

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Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates:

I am grateful for the opportunity to discuss the problem of East Timor. I would like to begin by clarifying my own position with regard to this problem.

My primary concern is not Southeast Asia but rather the Western industrial societies, particularly my own country, the United States: its foreign policy, the domestic matrix in which this policy arises and the ways it is interpreted in journalism and scholarship. In this context I have become much concerned over the years with the impact of American policy on Southeast Asia and other regions. I have strenuously opposed certain basic elements of this policy, and believe that it is often seriously misrepresented at home, a matter of considerable significance, since such misrepresentation facilitates the pursuit of dangerous and harmful programs without the constraints that an informed public opinion might, and sometimes does impose.

On December 7 1975, Indonesian military forces invaded East Timor, capturing the capital city of Dili, the first major step in a war of aggression that has repeatedly been condemned by the United Nations but that still continues without respite. The United States surely knew of the impending invasion, which had been widely forecast in the international press, was expected by Australia and took place immediately after the departure of President Gerald Ford and Henry Kissinger from a visit to Jakarta, where Kissinger had pointedly told newsmen that "the United States understands Indonesia's position on the question" of Timor.

Although Indonesia has effectively sealed off East Timor from the outside world, refusing entry even to the International Red Cross, nevertheless reports have filtered through indicating that there have been massive atrocities, with estimates by neutral or even pro-Indonesian observers of 50-100,000 slaughtered, roughly 10% of the population. The evidence compares very well in credibility with what is available concerning other areas of the world closed to direct investigation where atrocities have been alleged. I will return to some comparisons. Nevertheless, the American press -- indeed, the Western press quite generally -- has evaded the issue or has, with rare exceptions, adhered closely to the position of Indonesia and the U.S. government, a position that was expressed very well by Congressman J. Herbert Burke, ranking minority member of the House subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, when he wrote that "it is in all our interests to bury the Timor issue quickly and completely."

At every crucial point, the U.S. government, with the press trailing loyally in its wake, has denied or concealed the atrocities committed by its Indonesian ally and has taken the position that whatever minor improper actions may have occurred in the past, it is now a matter of history and no useful purpose is served by questioning Indonesian control of East Timor. The effect has been that the United States and its allies have been able to take part in massacres and repression in East Timor by providing Indonesia with the material support it requires to carry on its continuing war of aggression and the ideological support that enables it to do so virtually in secret. Again, I want to stress the significance of press complicity in these atrocities, unknown to a public that might be sufficiently aroused by the facts so as to prevent the governments of the industrial democracies from making their decisive contribution to what Shepard Forman, an anthropologist who worked in Timor, described in Congressional Hearings as "annihilation of simple mountain people." I want to stress as well that this is not ancient history. Only a few weeks ago a group of Australians who entered Dili harbor in a disabled

yacht saw "frigates, patrol boats, barges crammed with Indonesian soldiers, and many aircraft and helicopters," heard explosions in the distance, and "were left without doubts that Dili was still a war zone" (Canberra Times, Oct. 20 1978). The Indonesian effort to suppress the independence movement of East Timor continues, with the support of the industrial democracies. The whole affair has great import well beyond Timor.

According to the recent UNESCO declaration on news organizations, the mass media throughout the world "contribute effectively to promoting human rights, in particular by giving expression to oppressed pepples who struggle against colonialism, neo-colonialism, foreign occupation and all forms of racial discrimination and oppression and who are unable to make their voices heard within their own territories." The example of East Timor is one of the many that show how far that vision is removed from reality. The submissiveness of the media has left the general public unaware of the massacres in East Timor and of the direct complicity of the United States and its allies in them. Thus far from giving expression to oppressed peoples, the mass media in the rich and developed countries participate effectively in continuing oppression and major violations of human rights.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates:

I would now like to review the basic historical facts and their systematic distortion by the major Western powers and the compliant press, concentrating on the United States, though matters are little different elsewhere apart from Australia, to my knowledge.

East Timor had never been included within the colonial or post-colonial boundaries of Indonesia and, as Forman points out, "Indo-Javanese and Islamic influences barely can be noted." After World War II, he observed, mountain people "have proclaimed repeatedly their right of self-determination" and eagerly welcomed the steps towards independence which followed the 1974 Portuguese revolution. As soon as Portugal announced that independence would be granted to the colonies the tiny elite of Timor formed several political parties, of which the most important were the UDT and FRETILIN. The UN study Decolonization reports that though UDT was initially regarded as the most influential party, "its lack of positive policies, its associations with the 'ancien régime', together with its initial reluctance to support the ultimate goal of full independence led many of the party's original followers to swing their support to FRETILIN which by early 1975 was generally considered to have become the largest party in the Territory." In August 1975 the UDT staged a coup, probably with Indonesian complicity, setting off a bloody civil war that ended a few weeks later in a complete victory for FRETILIN. The UN study estimated the numbers killed at 2-3000. The figures are worth noting, since the United States, after reports of later Indonesian atrocities began to surface, has tried to claim that many of those killed were victims of the civil war.

The handling of the reports by the first foreign visitors after the brief civil war gives a revealing insight into the pattern of news management that has since prevailed in the United States. On September 4 the New York Times published an account by Gerald Stone, who was described as apparently "the first reporter allowed there since the fighting began." The Times story was actually revised and excerpted from a longer report carried by the London Times (Sept. 2). The modifications are instructive.

Stone attempted to verify reports of large-scale destruction and atrocities, attributed primarily to FRETILIN by Indonesian propaganda and news coverage based on it, then and since. His major conclusion was that the reports of destruction were vastly exaggerated and that "many of the stories fed to the public in the past two weeks were not simply exaggerations; they were the product of a purposeful campaign to plant lies." He implicated the Portuguese, Indonesian and Australian governments in this propaganda campaign.

In revising Stone's report for an American audience, the New York Times deleted his statement that there had been "much distortion and exaggeration" of the destruction and eliminated entirely his major conclusion about the purposeful lies of Indonesian and Western propaganda. What the New York Times did retain was Stone's description of terrible conditions in FRETILIN hospitals (the Portuguese had withdrawn the only doctor) and maltreatment of prisoners by FRETILIN. The sole subheading in the article reads: "evidence of beating." The process of creating the required history advanced yet another step in the Newsweek account of the edited excerpts that appeared in the New York Times. According to Newsweek, Stone had reported "devastation", "bloodshed" and FRETILIN atrocities, and his "dispatch supported the stories of many of the 4,000 refugees who have already fled Timor" (Sept. 15).

Note carefully the transition. A journalist visits the scene of reported devastation and atrocities which, he reports, were "filtered through the eyes of frightened and exhausted evacuees" or produced by Portuguese, Indonesian and Australian officials, all of whom "had reason to distrust Fretilin," a national independence movement with a moderate reformist program, according to direct reports by Western observers. He concludes that the reports are vastly exaggerated, in fact, in large measure propaganda fabrications. After editing by the New York Times that eliminates his major conclusion and modifies others, Newsweek concludes that he found that the reports were true. Thus the reading public is reinforced in the belief that what Newsweek calls "the Marxist Fretilin party" is bent on atrocities and that liberation movements are to be viewed with horror. And the stage is set for general acquiescence when U.S.-backed Indonesian military forces invade to "restore order." This pattern of news management persists throughout until today, with rare exceptions.

From early September until December 7 1975, East Timor was effectively administered by FRETILIN. There were accredited Australian journalists in the Territory throughout this period as well as Australian visitors, who have given favorable accounts of the brief interlude of semi-independence. James Dunn, who is perhaps the best-placed Western observer with long experience in Timor, headed an Australian aid mission in October and reported that the FRETILIN administration was functioning effectively and "enjoyed widespread support from the population, including many hitherto UDT supporters." The Australian Parliamentarian Ken Fry has testified to the same effect before the UN Security Council. In the one major book on this period, Jill Jolliffe, who was a correspondent in East Timor at the time, concurs in this judgment. Until mid-November, FRETILIN requested that Portuguese authorities, who had left towards the end of the brief civil war, return to complete the process of decolonization and throughout the period requested foreign governments to send observers and fact-finding missions, in vain.

Immediately after the complete victory of FRETILIN in early September Indonesia began its armed intervention. Indonesian border raids began on September 14. On October 16 Indonesian troops with a few Timorese in support roles captured the town of Balibó about 10 km. from the border. Five Australian newsmen were killed, an event that served effectively to warn journalists of the fate that awaited them if they remained after the outright invasion, as Jolliffe comments. Eyewitness reports of

Indonesian military action were filed during this period by Australian journalists Michael Richardson, Jill Jolliffe and Roger East, but received little international notice. The town of Atabae fell to Indonesian occupation on November 28 after two weeks of intensive bombardment. The expanding Indonesian attacks and lack of foreign reaction led to a decision by FRETILIN to declare independence just three years ago, on November 28 1975.

A full-scale Indonesian invasion was generally expected at that point. The United States and Australia undoubtedly knew what was about to happen. Diplomatic cables leaked subsequently in the Australian press reveal that in August 1975 the Australian Ambassador to Jakarta had informed his government that the U.S. State Department had instructed the embassy in Jakarta "to cut down its reporting on Timor" and that the U.S. Ambassador had expressed his view that "the U.S. should keep out of the Portuguese Timor situation and allow events to take their course," despite U.S. influence based on Indonesia's need for U.S. military assistance. In October the Australian Ambassador advised his government "that Australian knowledge of Indonesian intervention be concealed" to avoid complications with Indonesia. The primary difference between Indonesia and the United States in this regard is that in the United States the cover-up continues in the media as well; and of course, U.S. complicity by means of military and other support is far greater.

The U.S. government professes ignorance as to what was happening during this period, and press reports adhered closely to Indonesian propaganda. The sympathetic picture of FRETILIN administration conveyed by independent Western observers appeared nowhere, and the period is depicted as one of continuing civil strife. For example, David Andelman of the New York Times reported from Jakarta on November 26 that Indonesians "point to their hands-off policy with respect to the civil war that is engulfing Portuguese Timor" while Indonesian destroyers "cruise the waters around Timor to prevent infiltration of arms by sea to the left-wing rebels who seized control of the colony last August." In fact, there was no civil war and had been none for over two months, but rather a limited Indonesian incursion, and when Andelman wrote Atabae had been under naval bombardment for 12 days and fell to Indonesian forces two days later. Andelman wrote that Indonesian forces "have been showing remarkable restraint, for what is at stake [is military aid]." This remarkable restraint in fact existed only in the pages of America's leading newspaper. This report is quite typical of press coverage of the period.

As already noted, the Indonesian invasion of December 7 took place immediately after the departure of President Ford and Henry Kissinger from Jakarta. The New York Times reported on December 8 that "Indonesians hold Portuguese Timor after Incursion." Indonesian forces in fact held only the capital city of Dili, which they had captured with considerable barbarism. The difference is significant. The U.S. government has consistently been claiming that the fighting is essentially over, so that we must accept Indonesian annexation as a fact of life. The Times also reported falsely that the civil war (which had ended in early September) had been proceeding until the "incursion" and that Indonesia had been offering "no material assistance to the anti-Fretilin forces." In a perverse sense, the latter claim is true: that is, since Indonesia was itself conducting the military operations while falsely alleging that "anti-Fretilin forces" were doing so, it is true, technically, that Indonesia was not offering "military assistance to the anti-Fretilin forces."

The New York Times persisted in the same distortions in an editorial condemnation of Indonesian aggression, maintaining that "To be fair there was provocation in the unilateral declaration of independence last month by the leftist Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor, known as Fretilin, which had seemed to be winning

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the civil war handily against pro-Indonesian forces until Jakarta began to intervene." Recall that Indonesia had not "seized" East Timor but rather held only the capital city. FRETILIN did not "seem" to be winning the civil war, but had won it by early September, at which time Indonesia began its intervention, not in support of "pro-Indonesian forces," but on its own. The Times editors do not explain why the declaration of independence was a "provocation" to Indonesia, which had no claims to East Timor, and they say nothing about the Indonesian "provocation" of the preceding months. The Times also adds that "The real losers are Portuguese Timor's 620,000 inhabitants, whose interests and desires have been ignored by all parties to this deplorable affair" -- including the independence forces. Perhaps similar sentiments were expressed by thoughtful British commentators in July 1776.

The U.S. government claims to have suspended military assistance to Indonesia from December 1975 until June 1976. This turns out to have been as much of a fraud as the pretense of ignorance as to what was happening. Military aid during this period actually was above what the State Department had originally proposed to Congress, and has increased since. Furthermore, at least four new offers were made during this period, in express contradiction to Congressional testimony by representatives of the State Department and the Pentagon, including supplies and parts for OV-10 Broncos which are "specially designed for counter-insurgency operations against adversaries without effective anti-aircraft weapons, and wholly useless for defending Indonesia against a foreign enemy," as was pointed out in Congressional testimony by Cornell University Professor Benedict Anderson, who added that this policy has continued without substantial change through the Carter Administration. The "aid suspension" was secret -- so secret, that the Indonesian government was never informed of it. Virtually nothing of this has been discussed in the national media.

In Congressional testimony, the Deputy Legal Adviser of the State Department, George Aldrich, conceding that the Indonesians "were armed roughly 90 percent with our equipment," contended that "...we really did not know very much. Maybe we did not want to know very much, but I gather that for a time we did not know." As to this "ignorance," it is a fact that the West generally, the United States specifically, does not want to know, preferring that the issue be quickly "buried," as Congressman Burke has urged, forgotten along with the mass graves and demolished villages of East Timor.

The official U.S. government view is "that resolution of the matter would be best reached by the parties directly involved -- the Indonesians, the Portuguese and the Timorese." The legitimacy of the Indonesian "involvement" is precisely what is at issue; the Portuguese strenuously opposed the Indonesian involvement; the Timorese government that was in de facto control of the Territory apart from the border areas already conquered by Indonesia certainly opposed the invasion, with substantial popular support so far as is known, and continue to do so insofar as they are able to resist. Thus the official U.S. position reduces to acceptance of Indonesian aggression and its consequences, whatever the attitudes of the other "parties directly involved," and surely irrespective of the attitudes of the primary party, the people of East Timor themselves. Again, the media have been silent on these matters.

As for the continuing flow of U.S. arms, the Country Officer for Indonesia in the State Department, David T. Kenney, testified before Congress that one purpose is "to keep that area peaceful" -- this, in testimony on the Indonesian invasion of East Timor. Another State Department representative, at Hearings just last February, conceded that the conflict persists but notes "a certain change in the situation" in that a large number of people have moved from areas where they were

"under the control of Fretilin to areas where they could be protected by the Indonesian government" -- or to translate into plain English: have fled the merciless attack supplied and concealed by the U.S. government. The cynicism of the government formulations are matched only by those of the press, as we shall see directly.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates:

Indonesia has been attempting to conquer East Timor since December 1975, but so far without success. In July 1976 the formal incorporation of East Timor into Indonesia after a farcical "People's Council" was recognized by the United States. The State Department legal representative George Aldrich testified that "We actually know very little about the selection process for these delegates [to the People's Council], although the process itself took place at a time of military occupation by Indonesia during which considerable fighting was still going on." Actually, the U.S. government knows all that need be known about the "selection process," but it is striking that on the basis of this professed ignorance the U.S. government was willing to recognize the takeover while fully aware that fighting continued, "renewing" the arms shipments that had never been halted. While the government professes ignorance about the facts, it has a clear insight into American interests. The State Department legal adviser stated that the U.S. did not question the incorporation of East Timor into Indonesia because it was "an accomplished fact" and "such a policy would not serve our best interests in light of the importance of our relations with Indonesia," which are sufficiently well-known so that I need not describe them here.

In March 1977, nine months after "integration," the Country Officer for Indonesia in the State Department, David Kenney, testified that about 200,000 of the 650,000 people of East Timor "would be considered in areas under Indonesian administration" -- an assessment that contrasts strikingly with the government claim that the war was essentially over in early 1976 and that "Timor has effectively become a part of Indonesia." Kenney testified further that the people are happy with integration: "They have decided their best interest lies at this time, in incorporation with Indonesia." Their "decision" was expressed in the fraudulent "People's Council." Of course, there were still the two-thirds of the population who had not as yet been able to express their "decision" because they were not under Indonesian administration -- or to put it in the terms favored by the State Department, because they are not as yet "protected" by Indonesia.

The Indonesian attempt to conquer East Timor has been a story of mounting atrocities, attested by refugee reports, church officials, letters that have been smuggled out, and other sources. Virtually all independent observers estimate the numbers slaughtered as in the range of 50-100,000. The Foreign Minister of Indonesia, Adam Malik, estimated the number killed as "50,000 people or perhaps 80,000" (Age, April 1 1977). But, he added, "what does this mean if compared with 600,000 people who want to join Indonesia. Then what is the big fuss. It is possible that they may have been killed by Australians and not us. Who knows? It was war" (Canberra Times, April 1 1977). The silence in the U.S. media over this admission is remarkable, no less so than the silence accorded the report by Indonesian Church officials, who are strongly in support of "integration" and anti-FRETILIN, after a visit to East Timor in which they found that 500,000 people were not under Indonesian military control in late 1976 and that local priests estimated the numbers killed at 100,000. The Indonesian Church officials describe a town of 5000 that allegedly welcomed the Indonesian troops though a year later only 1000 people remained in the village, the rest having joined FRETILIN in the mountains. They report that of the 30,000 people in the capital city of Dili, the one place where there may have been some initial willingness to accept the Indonesian invasion, 20,000 want to leave for Portugal while others are with FRETILIN. Neither this nor other information to the same effect has reached

the American media, though the Australian Parliament Legislative Research Service described the report of the Church officials as "significant and disturbing" and concluded that there is "mounting evidence" that the Indonesians have carried out "indiscriminate killing on a scale unprecedented in post-World War 2 history."

I cannot review here the evidence supporting this judgment, but it is ample. How has the American press responded? The New York Times index gives a good indication. In the year 1975, when the fate of the Portuguese colonies was a matter of much concern in the West, Timor received 6 full columns in the annual index. In 1976, when the Indonesian army was beginning the "annihilation of simple mountain people," coverage dropped to half a column. In 1977, when this massacre was reaching truly awesome proportions, coverage dropped to five lines.

On the rare occasions when the press has deigned to refer to this "indiscriminate killing on a scale unprecedented in post-World War 2 history," it has followed the U.S. government in pretending that the killings took place largely during the civil war. On February 15 1976 the New York Times devoted all of 150 words to a report that "About 60,000 people have been killed since the outbreak of civil war in Portuguese Timor last August, according to the deputy chairman of the territory's provisional government" -- that is, the government installed by the Indonesian army. The Times report went on to say that FRETILIN had been fighting "forces favoring union with Indonesia." Recall that in the civil war perhaps 2-3000 were killed, a fact that was not reported by the Times. Thus the remainder of the estimated 60,000 were victims of the U.S.-backed Indonesian invasion. As for the forces "favoring union with Indonesia," these had been defeated in September and played no significant part in the subsequent fighting. These forces did not, in fact, favor such union for the most part, certainly not prior to their defeat in September 1975 and probably not thereafter, if we discount the effects of Indonesian coercion. The fact that the Times found it necessary to devote only 150 words to this massacre is revealing, as is the falsification of the facts, and the remark attributed with no comment to their source that "the war is virtually over" in February 1976. The war continues, while the American press maintains its silence.

James Dunn presented evidence of Indonesian atrocities in Congressional Hearings in March 1977, based on his interviews with Timorese refugees in Portugal. His testimony was reported, but the story quickly died. The U.S. press, which is assiduous in seeking out refugee reports alleging atrocities in countries that have escaped U.S. domination, has yet to interview these refugees; nor have they appeared before Congress, though Dunn reported that the refugees were eager to testify. Occasionally the U.S. press reports the plight of the refugees in Portugal, carefully avoiding anything they might have to report about Timor, however (e.g., New York Times, Oct. 24 1976).

One can find an occasional indication in the press that something ugly may be happening in Timor. Thus, the New York Times carried a nine-line Reuters dispatch (March 1 1977) on a petition to President Carter by the majority of the Australian Parliament, "charging atrocities by Indonesian troops" and asking President Carter "to comment publicly on the situation in East Timor." But nine lines was evidently considered too much for a topic of such meager significance. The story did not make it to the New York Times index because it was deleted from the Late City Edition, which is the newspaper of record for microfilm and for history. Times editors and correspondents are much too busy seeking evidence of Communist atrocities to bother with the possible massacre of 100,000 Timorese at the hands of a U.S. client using American arms.

Robert Shaplen, the noted Asia correspondent for the New Yorker, commented

briefly on East Timor in his "Letter from Indonesia," December 12 1977. According to his reconstruction of history, "Indonesian troops intervened, somewhat crudely and clumsily, in December of 1975, in a war for independence which the East Timorese were ostensibly waging against Portugal." The idea that the East Timorese were fighting Portugal is a novel contribution, but the reference to the massacre of thousands of people as a somewhat crude and clumsy intervention is typical of the press. Shaplen claims that "the so-called Fight for Freedom" from Portugal, which exists only in his imagination, "turned into a civil war" among several factions, of which one, "the left-wing Fretilin, objected strenuously to the manner in which Indonesian troops moved in to take over the former colony," an interesting way to refer to the resistance struggle against Indonesian aggression. "According to neutral observers," Shaplen continues, "some ten thousand East Timorese, including many civilians, were killed by the Indonesian forces..." In fact, "neutral observers" and even those who are pro-Indonesian and anti-FRETILIN have consistently offered figures five to ten times that high, and only the U.S. State Department has given the estimate that Shaplen attributes to "neutral observers." His reference suggests that he is simply passing "information" from some U.S. government source, identified as "neutral," not an uncommon practice, unfortunately. Shaplen concludes that the Indonesians "don't seem particularly perturbed by the criticisms" that they receive from "many Third World nations," which is natural, given the support they receive from the First World industrial societies and their journalists. He also reports an announcement by General Suharto that "On December 31st [1977], the Army will start a new campaign against the guerrillas," a matter that is of little concern to this observer or his colleagues in the American press.

One final example of the kind of report that occasionally reaches the United States is a Reuters dispatch from Dili on a recent guided tour (Los Angeles Times, Sept. 27 1978). The reporter discusses "the bitter civil war that preceded the merging of East Timor into Indonesia": "After the Portuguese colonial rulers departed in December, 1975, pro-Indonesian forces, later aided by regular Indonesian troops, defeated left-wing Fretilin independence guerrillas in an eight-month civil war." Note that this report is false in every crucial particular, though it accords very well with the needs of Indonesian and U.S. propaganda. The Portuguese left just before the end of the civil war in September 1975, and the merging of East Timor into Indonesia, not recognized in most of the world, came ten months later, not after a "civil war" but after an Indonesian invasion that even the State Department concedes had conquered only a third of the population nine months after this "integration," after 15 months of bitter warfare.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates:

I have mentioned a few of the many examples of direct reports of atrocities that have been systematically excluded from the American press. A final example is a UPI dispatch from Singapore (Australian, October 8 1977) reporting that "30,000 Indonesian troops are still roaming East Timor slaying men, women and children." The report is based on the account of a French photo-journalist Denis Reichle of Paris Match, who was deported from Timor after a six-day visit to a mountain retreat of FRETILIN in East Timor. He gives "a safe estimate" of 70-75,000 East Timorese killed by the Indonesians in 18 months of combat. The Indonesians, he reports, do not seek combat with FRETILIN forces but "were 'systematically wiping out' the populations of villages known or suspected to be Fretilin supporters and destroying Fretilin supply lines and sources." "He said Catholic missionaries, led by the Bishop of Atambua [in Indonesian Timor], were the only voices in Timor trying to stop the 'systematic killing-off of East Timorese'." The Bishop, he said, "had been trying to get an interview with Indonesia's President Suharto for 2 1/2 months, but his requests had so far been ignored," and he reported that "a German priest had been driven insane by the constant killings in his area." In contrast to fairy tales about a "civil war" in which "pro-Indonesian forces" had defeated FRETILIN, this eye-witness report by a Western journalist did not reach the U.S. media.

Unable to provide food and medical treatment to a population of half a million under the circumstances described, FRETILIN is encouraging refugees to move to Indonesian-controlled areas, according to James Dunn, who wrote: "It was therefore not surprising to learn that many of the population were encouraged by Fretilin to return to towns and villages under Indonesian control."

We have already seen how these facts are interpreted by U.S. government spokesmen, who speak of the flow of refugees to areas where they can be "protected" by the Indonesian army. The press, once again, adheres strictly to the State Department version of events. Henry Kamm reported on the refugee flow in the New York Times (April 19 1978) in the following terms: "The diminishing of supplies of the Fretilin guerrillas appears to have caused them to lose much of their hold over the significant part of the population of about 600,000 whom they have forced to live in regions under their control." How does Kamm know that the population has been "forced to live" under FRETILIN "control"? How are the "scattered Fretilin groups," who barely exist according to the Indonesian propaganda ministry and the New York Times, able to exert control over the population? These questions do not arise. It is a matter of doctrine, not fact, that FRETILIN must have "forced" the population to live under their control, and that they are now fleeing to areas where they can be "protected" by the Indonesians. It is hardly imaginable that the distinguished correspondent of the New York Times -- who had just won the Pulitzer prize for his reporting of the suffering of refugees from Communism in Southeast Asia when this dispatch appeared -- would report the observation by Denis Reichle after his visit to East Timor: FRETILIN forces "are simply East Timorese who would rather die fighting than submit to what they consider to be Indonesian slavery."

In similar journalistic style, the San Francisco Chronicle reports from Jakarta (Oct. 18 1978) on the imminent collapse of FRETILIN. Relying entirely on statements by Indonesian military commanders, presented simply as fact, the report expresses deep humanitarian concern over "the plight of thousands of villagers still under FRETILIN control or in refugee camps," in particular, those who "are afraid to leave the mountains into which they had been forced from their homes to grow food for FRETILIN."

The Times Pulitzer prize-winning specialist on victims of Communism does not provide the source for his insight into the minds of the refugees fleeing from the regions where they have been "forced to live" by the "scattered Fretilin groups." Perhaps it was General Ali Murtopo, Indonesia's Information Minister and the military officer in charge of the early stages of the Indonesian invasion, whom he quotes without any qualification as saying that the lack of security that requires Indonesia to keep foreigners away is not caused by FRETILIN forces (which are supposed to be virtually nonexistent according to the propaganda line of Indonesia, the United States, and the U.S. media) "but from antiforeign feelings among Timorese, the origin of which he did not explain. 'When they see a foreigner they have a prejudice and would make moves that make trouble,' [General Murtopo] said." Westerners have often been baffled by what they call the "xenophobia" of Asian peasants and tribesmen, a phenomenon not yet explained by modern anthropology, which seems to arise among groups that are subjected to saturation bombing, forced population removal and other modes of "protection" designed by their foreign benefactors.

Henry Kamm goes on to say that the international backing for FRETILIN "appears to be limited to highly vocal groups of Australian leftwing students who have made of eastern Timor an issue similar to Vietnam, with Indonesia playing the American role." His comparison of Timor and Vietnam is illuminating. Though this has escaped the Times Asia specialist, the protest over Indonesian exploits in Timor includes the majority of states in the United Nations, the majority of the Australian

Parliament, the Australian labor movement, church groups, and many others. In the interest of burying American complicity in massacre as quickly as possible, however, it is expedient for the press to pretend that only highly vocal left-wing students are trying to whip up opposition to the Indonesian invasion, as they did, in such an annoying fashion, at the time of the American war in Vietnam.

One of those protestors is Michael Hodgman, a strongly anti-Communist Australian MP, who had specifically denounced the effort to identify opposition to Indonesian aggression as a left-wing plot. Writing in February 1977, he said that "For us, as Australians, to bury our heads in the sand and turn our backs on what is alleged to have occurred, would be a gross act of national moral cowardice...future generations would have to bear the same shame and disgrace which fell upon those citizens of nazi Germany who turned a blind eye to Auschwitz..." How much more true is this of American Congressmen, journalists and the public, given the direct American role in implementing the aggression and its consequences and building a wall of silence around it. More recently, Hodgman charged in Parliament that between 30-40,000 people have died in East Timor because defoliants destroyed their crops. His allegation received 33 words in the Manchester-London Guardian (Sept. 14 1978), 33 words more than it has received in the United States, to my knowledge. Representative Donald Fraser wrote a letter to Secretary of State Cyrus Vance on December 8 1977 citing "a reliable report that Indonesian forces have been using chemical sprays on crops in areas under Fretilin control and that U.S.-manufactured planes, the OV-10s, are being used to spread these chemicals." The State Department responded that it believed the report to be erroneous. The press has not been sufficiently interested to inquire.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates:

I mentioned earlier Robert Shaplen's off-hand remark that Indonesia planned a new offensive in December 1977. A report by the Asia correspondent of the Los Angeles Times, George McArthur, adds some highly significant information (International Herald Tribune, Dec. 5 1977). He quotes a Western diplomat as saying that the Indonesians "are running out of military inventory. The operations on Timor have pushed them to the wall." Indonesian arms supplies have been virtually exhausted, according to this report, even though "the guerrillas now number only about 600 men." McArthur does not explain how a war against 600 men can exhaust the military supplies of Indonesia, but people not constrained by the conventions of American journalism can perhaps draw some inferences. McArthur then reports that arms salesmen from the major Western industrial nations are attempting to pour arms into Indonesia, adding falsely that the Carter Administration is "slowing down international armaments sales," [redacted] But his remark about Western arms salesmen is quite accurate; the major arms suppliers do not wish to miss the opportunity to take part in the glorious adventure in East Timor, where Indonesian arms supplies have been virtually exhausted in a war against 600 scattered men. In April 1978 British Aerospace signed a contract with Indonesia for Hawk ground-attack/trainer aircraft, well-designed for counterinsurgency. The French Foreign Minister, on a visit to Jakarta in September 1978, reported plans for substantial armaments sales, adding in response to a query that France would not place Indonesia in an embarrassing position in any manner at the United Nations (Le Monde, Sept. 14 1978). The announcement that France too will join in the torture of East Timor aroused no great indignation in France, to my knowledge. The Carter Administration, meanwhile, had requested a sizable increase in military assistance to Indonesia for fiscal 1978 (New York Times, July 17 1977).

To conclude this survey, let us turn to the Human Rights Reports of the State Department. In the March 1977 Report, covering the period when Indonesia launched its murderous attack, there is no mention whatsoever of Timor. The omission is

rectified in the 1978 Report, which deals with allegations of genocide in Timor as follows, in toto:

> Questions have been raised concerning atrocities by Indonesian troops in East Timor in 1975 and 1976 prior to the incorporation of East Timor into Indonesia. The Indonesian Government withdrew and disciplined offending units guilty of individual excesses, but most of the human losses in East Timor appear to have occurred prior to Indonesia's intervention.

The final statement is a disgraceful falsehood. No less disgraceful is the refusal even to concede that questions have been raised concerning atrocities after July 1976, let alone to consider the substantial evidence supporting the allegations that there have been massive atrocities and that the U.S. government is participating in them, and that with the complicity of the press, it is concerned to bury the issue as quickly and completely as possible.

The fact that the State Department Report "was gentle on alleged atrocities in East Timor, asserting that most lives were lost before Indonesia's intervention in the former Portuguese colony" was reported in the New York Times (Feb. 10 1978). Neither the reporter nor the editors commented on the glaring falsity of this claim or the significance of the State Department cover-up, nor did they mention that the Carter Administration had been stepping up military aid to Indonesia.

The United Nations have repeatedly called upon the Government of Indonesia to withdraw its armed forces from East Timor so that the people of the Territory will be able "freely to exercise their right to self-determination and independence." The most crucial vote was the one that immediately followed the Indonesian invasion. The United States abstained. In a cablegram of January 23 1976 entitled "The Blocs are Breaking Up," then UN Ambassador Daniel P. Moynihan took pride in the "considerable progress" that had been made by U.S. tactics at the UN "toward a basic foreign policy goal, that of breaking up the massive blocs of nations, mostly new nations, which for so long have been arrayed against us in international forums..." He specifically cited the General Assembly vote on Timor, when "the non-aligned were similarly divided in the voting." This division and the U.S. abstention were significant. As Professor Thomas Franck of New York University Law School testified before Congress, it "sent a clear signal to Indonesia that the United Nations lacked the political will to oppose Djakarta's action and that the United States would turn a deaf ear to the demands of the East Timorese to be accorded the benefits of the firmly established international normative right of self-determination."

The subsequent record shows that this assessment is accurate. I will not review the UN record, but will merely note that two years later, the United States voted against a UN General Assembly resolution calling on the UN Special Committee on Decolonization to send a mission to the Territory. This vote again was significant, in the light of the fact that Indonesia was preparing for a new military offensive at that time. The United States was joined by Japan and other countries which, as the Christian Science Monitor reported, "seek close political and economic ties with Indonesia" (December 8 1977).

The latter comment is, of course, crucial. The economic advantages offered by good relations with Indonesia explain why the outside world has been intent on burying the tragedy of East Timor, which continues to unfold, quickly and completely.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates:

I will conclude these remarks by offering a comparison which, I believe, gives some insight into the ways in which the mass media in the West "contribute effectively

to promoting human rights," in the words of the UNESCO declaration. The period of alleged Indonesian atrocities in East Timor is late 1975 to the present. The evidence derived from neutral or even pro-Indonesian and anti-FRETILIN sources suggests that the numbers slaughtered in this period may be in the neighborhood of 50-100,000. There is, of course, another country in the region where major atrocities have been alleged in exactly the same time frame, namely, Cambodia, where the harshest critics claim that perhaps 100,000 people have been slaughtered since April 1975. In addition, it is alleged by the same critics that perhaps a million have died from starvation and disease, but although the Western press is careful to hide the fact, such deaths are chargeable in significant measure to the American account. Comparing East Timor and Cambodia, we see that the time frame of alleged atrocities is the same, the numbers allegedly slaughtered are roughly comparable in absolute terms, and five to ten times as high in East Timor relative to the population. Furthermore, the evidence is quite comparable; I have reviewed both cases in considerable detail and my own conclusion is that the sources in the case of East Timor are more credible than those that have received massive international publicity in the case of Cambodia, though there are of course fewer sources in the case of East Timor, since the West prefers silenee and apologetics.

We have here two paired examples of comparable allegations concerning major violations of human rights. For Westerners concerned with human rights, the case of East Timor is, obviously, of vastly greater significance. Whatever the situation may be in Cambodia, it is beyond the reach of Western human rights activists. But the case of East Timor is radically different. Even a show of displeasure by the great power that provided 90% of the arms for the Indonesian invasion and that continues to provide Indonesia with material and diplomatic support for its depredations while laboring to conceal them, would be likely to have significant effects, and the same is true of the other powers that are working to bury the issue as quickly and completely as possible as they seek to join in the bloodshed by supplying arms themselves. For Westerners who speak of human rights out of genuine moral concern, then, it is quite obvious that the case of East Timor should be the focus of far greater attention than alleged atrocities in Cambodia.

It is instructive, therefore, to compare the Western reaction to these two cases of reported atrocities. In the case of Cambodia, stories of atrocities and repression have not only been eagerly seized upon by the Western media and offered massive international publicity, but also embellished by substantial fabrication, a fact that is well-documented. In the case of Timor, in dramatic contrast, the media have shown no interest in discovering or exposing what may have happened; quite the contrary. Apart from Australia, there has been near total silence. On the rare occasions when the press deals with Timor it generally presents as fact the latest handout of the Indonesian propaganda agencies or the State Department, or else reports the iniquity of the resistance, which is forcing people to live under its control.

The difference in international reaction is revealing. Specifically, it reveals how empty and hypocritical is much of the "human rights" clamor in the West. It teaches us something about the meaning of the sudden concern for "human rights" that has moved to stage center just at the moment when the lustre of classical colonialist and interventionist ideologies has dimmed.

The nations of the world and honest journalists in free societies need not adhere to these practices and doctrines. They can demand that the International Red Cross, UN observers and independent journalists be admitted to East Timor, and that the flow of arms to Indonesia be halted, so that the invaders will be forced to cease their savage attacks and the right of the people of the Territory to self-determination may finally be exercised.